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# Return of the National Student Association

A "Young People's Lobby for Jobs" and a rally at the U.S. Capitol will be held in Washington on April 14 to protest the Reagan Administration's plans to cut wasteful government spending and curb the oppressive federal bureaucracy.

The lobby is being organized by the Young Worker's Liberation League (YWLL), the youth group of the Communist Party, U.S.A. But what is of particular interest is that a major co-sponsor is the United States Students Association (USSA), a national organization that claims to represent more than three million college and university students, including the statewide student associations of California, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Representatives John Conyers (D.-Mich.) and Ted Weiss (D.-N.Y.) are among the congressional sponsors of the activities.

The "youth lobby" will fight proposed cuts in the government boondoggle known as the CETA jobs program, work to "save" the Department of Education from possible extinction, and promote the strengthening and expansion of affirmative action "for all jobs and education programs." The lobby will also oppose the idea of a youth sub-minimum wage, a proposal designed to increase job opportunities for young people.

The lobbying and rally are scheduled on the last day of a "national student lobbying conference" of the USSA to be held in Washington on April 10-14. On April 14, according to Pedro Rodriguez, national student secretary of the YWLL, representatives of the YWLL, the USSA and other groups will visit congressional offices to press their demands. In addition, the USSA is trying to arrange a meeting with Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell later that day. The "Rally for Youth Employment" will follow these activities.

The USSA, which claims as members more than 225 student governments and about 25 state student associations, has lobbied Congress for many years for more federal funding and involvement in education. The USSA claims to have played a "major role" in the creation of the Department of Education and, perhaps as a result, received a \$52,346 grant from the Department. The USSA worked closely with the Carter Administration on many educational issues, opposing, for example, the tuition tax credit bill.

One USSA brochure contains the following statement by former President Carter: "One way that I know that my Administration is on the right track in the field of education is the continued and enthusiastic support of our programs in education and other fields by the USSA."

One issue on which the USSA disagreed with the Carter Administration was that of draft registration. The USSA opposed the Carter plan and sponsored "educational teach-ins" on many college campuses to "provide a forum to discuss the draft and [our] increasingly aggressive foreign policy." The USSA selected as its anti-draft project director one Jack Colhoun, a Vietnam War deserter who is now a correspondent for the *Guardian*, a Marxist newsweekly.

The Colhoun selection is just one indication of the radical turn the USSA has taken since it was revealed in 1967 that the National Student Association, which merged with the National Student Lobby to form the USSA in 1978, was receiving CIA funds. Today the USSA has a plank in its national platform that opposes any CIA presence on campus. This would, of course, prevent students from even meeting with CIA recruiters at colleges and universities. The USSA also complains about the CIA's "authority to infiltrate and influence foreign organizations, like foreign student groups."

Those "student groups," as it turns out, work closely with the USSA. The USSA is, in fact, an observer at meetings of the International Union of Students (IUS), one of the two major international Communist youth organizations. The other is the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), whose U.S. affiliate is the YWLL.

According to the 1978 CIA Report on Soviet Propaganda Operations, prepared at the request of Rep. John Ashbrook (R.-Ohio), the IUS and the WFDY are the organizers of the Communist "youth festivals" that are staged every few years. The most recent one was in Cuba in 1978. The co-chairmen of the U.S. delegation to that event were James Steele, national chairman of the YWLL, and Frank Jackalone, past chairman of the USSA.

In an interview conducted at the USSA Washington headquarters, the USSA executive director, Frank X. Viggiano, defended his organization's contacts with the IUS. "We don't endorse them. We realize it's heavily dominated by the East. We realize it's heavily supported by Soviet resources," Viggiano said. He added that he realizes that "a lot of things they say are basically voicing Soviet policy." Nevertheless, Viggiano said IUS meetings provide an opportunity to discuss issues of "detente" and "world peace" with students of many other countries.

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Indeed, the USSA platform has a section on peace and disarmament, which calls for "severe cuts in the federal defense budget, with an eye to gradual yet purposeful disarmament in our nation." It adds, "Joining the campaign begun by the International Union of Students, our call should be: 'Spend Money on Education, Not Arms!'" Hence, despite Viggiano's claims, the USSA *does* endorse the IUS, at least its campaigns.

Moreover, the section of the platform on Latin America calls for the USSA to "undertake steps to establish closer communications with national and international student organizations in this area to coordinate efforts in condemnation and denouncement of the policy of the reactionary forces."

It says that the USSA "has expressed its solidarity with the students and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean countries struggling against the domination of transnational corporations by means of different forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism and by the imposition of dictatorships, which violate basic human rights." The platform calls for the USSA to establish closer relations with the people of Nicaragua, Panama and Puerto Rico, "whose people are struggling for their right to self-determination."

Criticism of the Soviet Union and other Communist states is hard to find, although there is one small section that "recognizes the seriousness" of human rights violations in the Soviet Union. There is also a section that calls for students to express concern about the welfare and survival of the people of Indochina. But it doesn't criticize the Communist regimes in the region that have created the present holocaust.

Viggiano also defended the USSA's contacts with the YWLL. He described it as "bridging the gap" among different groups. He said: "My view of it is that we've gotten together on some very isolated issues." Viggiano said the YWLL opened up the USSA's "avenue of communication" with Communist youth groups in the Soviet Union and other countries.

Of course, conducting relations with such groups requires a lot of travel to various countries, and the USSA recently adopted its own travel agency known as Educatours, a division of Anniversary Tours. According to a USSA brochure, "Educatours is the only travel agency in the United States that possesses membership in the International Bureau for Youth and Tourism." And where can USSA representatives travel? An advertisement for Anniversary Tours that recently appeared in the Communist *Daily World* said,

"Travel anywhere—any time. Tours to Cuba, USSR, Eastern Europe and all other countries."

On domestic and social issues, the USSA has also adopted far-left positions, supporting marijuana decriminalization, the ERA, abortion, and opposing the death penalty, discrimination against "gays," and nuclear power.

The USSA's involvement in radical politics prompted the formation two years ago of a rival student group known as the American Student Association (ASA), which focuses its energies on educational issues. It appears that the ASA is picking up support from student governments just as fast as the USSA is losing support. Last year the American Student Federation merged with the ASA and, according to ASA President Tom Duffy, the ASA membership currently numbers 500 student government associations representing over three million students.

Although the *Daily World* has attacked the ASA as a "rightist threat," it appears that the ASA is a moderate-liberal student group. It named liberal Democratic Rep. James Weaver (Ore.) as its "Legislator of the Year" in 1979 and featured Ralph Nader at one of its recent conferences.

There is at least one major difference between the USSA and the ASA. According to Duffy, the ASA has invited a representative of the new independent students' association in Poland to speak at its 1981 summer convention. The Polish students are, among other things, trying to end compulsory courses in Marxism and the Russian language. But the USSA, which works with the official Communist youth group in Poland, has failed to take a stand in support of the independent Polish students. Although Viggiano told HUMAN EVENTS that the Polish student movement was a "very positive" development, he said the USSA was just "watching events" and being "very cautious." He said the USSA might recognize the new student association "if the tide flows toward recognition." He said the matter may be brought up at a future USSA meeting.

Thus, a major U.S. student association, which claims to represent millions of American students at international forums around the world, remains essentially silent about that courageous struggle for freedom and independence in Poland. Those student governments, congressional representatives and Administration officials who deal with the USSA should not be under any illusions. When the USSA representatives march against the Reagan budget cuts on April 14, they will be marching for the extreme left.